

# Legal Assistance Resource Center

## ♦ of Connecticut, Inc. ♦

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To: Members of the Human Services Committee  
From: Jane McNichol, Executive Director  
Date: January 22, 2009

### **Re: TANF/Family Welfare Program in Connecticut**

Thank you for the opportunity to present you with information on the TANF/Jobs First program in Connecticut. I have prepared some charts which highlight major concerns about how the program has been administered in Connecticut. I did not prepare comprehensive testimony because I believe that the basics of the program will be adequately presented by the representatives of the Department of Social Services and the Department of Labor. LARCC is in the process of updating a more comprehensive report on the Jobs First program, which I will share with the Committee when it is completed.

Today, I just want to highlight a few major areas:

- **Cash assistance benefits are very low** and, until two years ago, had not increased since at least 1996. For a family of three in most of the state, the basic cash assistance benefit is \$576 a month or \$6,912 a year.

Until cost of living increases were adopted in 2007 and 2008, the basic monthly benefit for a family of three was \$543 a month, or \$6,516.

This is the benefit for families in which the adults are determined by the state to be exempt for work requirements, as well as for families trying to move from welfare to work.

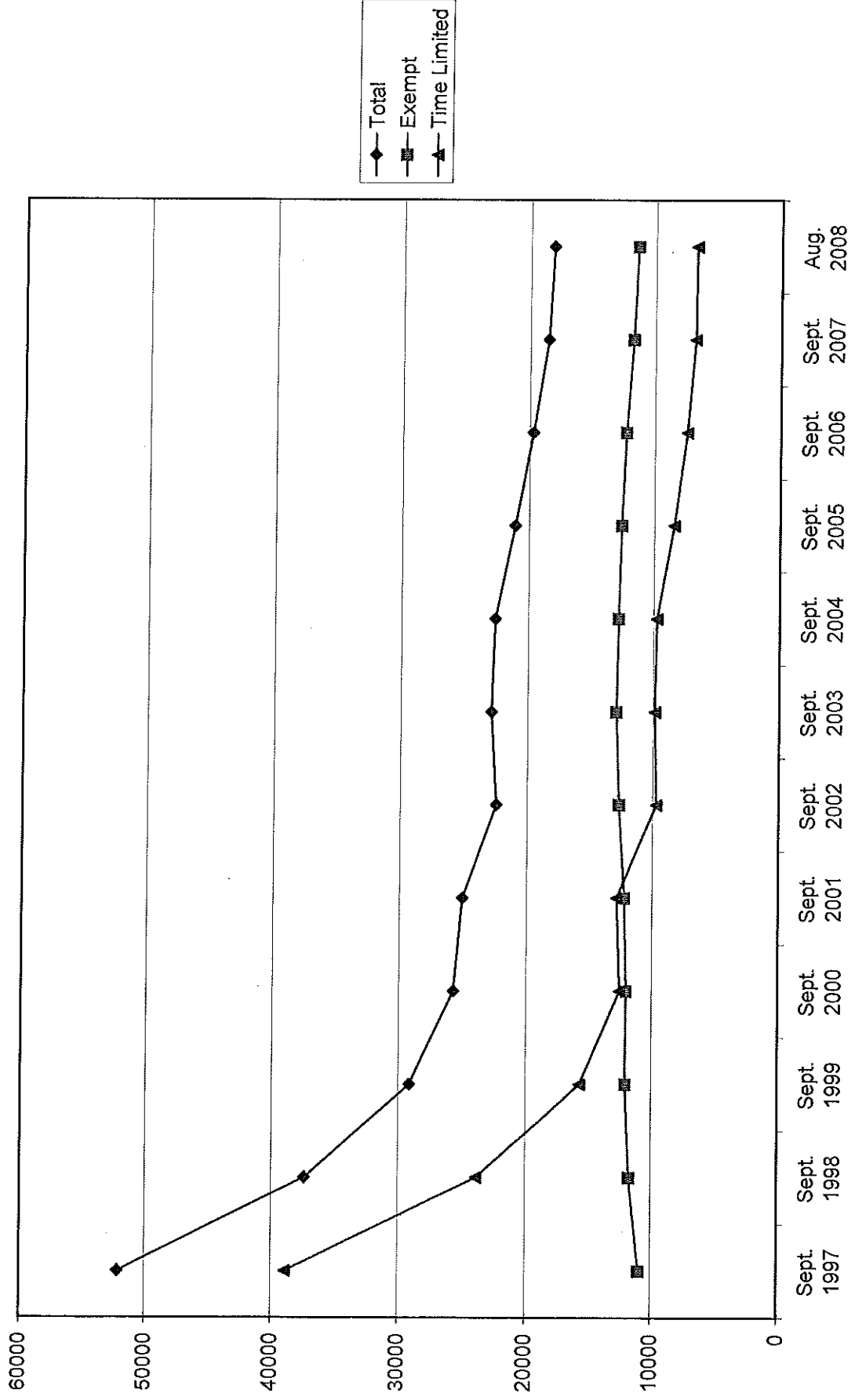
- **The number of families receiving cash assistance has fallen dramatically** - from about 56,000 in 1996 to about 19,000 in 2008. The reduction has been almost exclusively in the number of families in the time-limited, work program. The number of families receiving assistance which are exempt from the work requirements has remained steady at about 12,000 families.
- **As structured and administered, the program is not a useful resource to families in which the parents are deemed able to work**, whether or not the parent has the skills needed to get and keep a job and whether or not there are jobs available in the economy.

Families with barriers to employment can usually receive cash assistance for 21 to 33 months if they comply with program rules and remain very poor. After that time, even if a family has complied with program rules and remains very poor, the family can only continue to receive cash assistance if it is determined that the family faces two or more barriers to employment. In practice, very few families are found to have these barriers.

If the parent in a family gets a job and works more than about 20 hours a week, the family will be ineligible for extensions. A family of three with earned income of more than \$666 a month is not eligible for an extension of cash assistance.

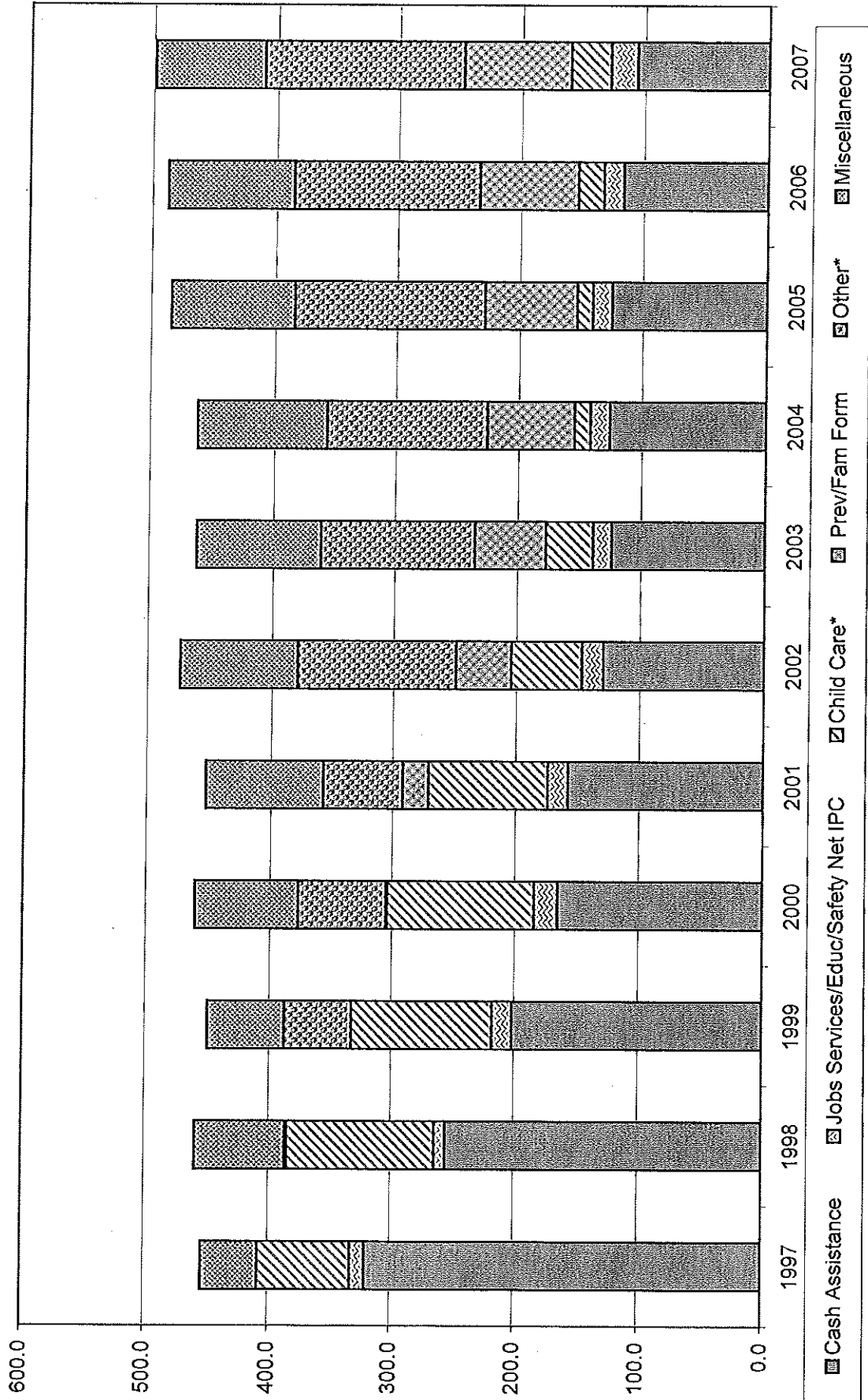
- **Connecticut has recently become eligible for additional federal funds from the TANF Contingency Fund** because of increases in our Food Stamp/SNAP caseload. These funds could be used to fund programs which meet any of the TANF purposes. Currently, the Contingency Fund is a capped fund paid out to states on a first-come, first-served basis. The state should ensure that we are applying expeditiously for these funds.
- **The federal stimulus package in the House of Representatives contains provisions for an additional Contingency Fund** which could reimburse the state for 80% of the costs of increased cash assistance, subsidized employment or short-term benefits. The state should advocate for these proposals at the federal level and be prepared to adopt programs to capture this additional funding.

TFA Caseload 1996-2008





TANF/MOE Spending by Major Program Areas - FFY 1997-2007 (in millions)



**COMBINED TANF AND MOE SPENDING - FFY 1997 - 2007**  
(in millions of dollars)

	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007
Transfer to SSBG	5.9	24.1	26.7	26.7	26.7	26.2
<b>Cash Assistance</b>	<b>320.6</b>	<b>202.0</b>	<b>158.4</b>	<b>124.4</b>	<b>125.7</b>	<b>106.8</b>
<b>Child Care*</b>	<b>75.5</b>	<b>115.0</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>32.6</b>
Other Services					0.3	0.1
Assistance - Prior Law			6.4	1.6	2.2	2.5
Other Work Act/Education (Higher Ed scholarships)			.4	16.8	7.7	1.1
GoodNewsGar; DOL Serv; WTW				1.6	1.2	0.3
<b>Employment Services/ IPC</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>21.7</b>
Transportation/Safety Net			5.1	5.3	4.8	4.0
Diversion						
Rental Assistance				1.8	2.3	
Energy						
Medicaid for Non-Citizens			5.0	8.3	8.6	
<b>Prevention of Pregnancy*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>76.2</b>
<b>2 - Parent Family Formation*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>10.0</b>
Prior Law*			13.0	15.9	15.5	18.7
Administration	37.3	37.0	37.0	21.5	28.6	34.3
Information Technology	2.5	1.0	1.7	0.8	0.7	0.9
Family Supportive Housing (DCF)					0.9	
<b>Other*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>65.4</b>	<b>126.4</b>	<b>156.6</b>	<b>163.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>453.9</b>	<b>450.1</b>	<b>452.7</b>	<b>461.5</b>	<b>484.2</b>	<b>498.9</b>

<b>OTHER includes:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	0.7				
State "Medicaid" for Non-Citizens					12.2
Faith Based Initiatives				0.1	
Family Violence Prevention					
Outreach Services			2.1	3.8	0.5
<b>SDE School Readiness</b>			<b>32.9</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>54.3</b>
SDE Adult Education		0.7	0.8	0.5	
SDE Family Resource Centers		1.6			0.7
SDE Priority School Districts					
<b>DCF Case Management Services</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>32.2</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>40.1</b>
DCF Substance Abuse Screening	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6
DCF Trtm't/Prev/Child Abuse	3.9	3.4	4.1	3.6	3.5
DCF Family Preservation Services	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.9
DCF Substance Abuse Services	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.6
DCF Local Systems of Care		0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2
DCF Community Emergency Services		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
DCF Family Violence Services		0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4
DCF Early Childhood Development		1.8	0.4	0.2	0.4
DCF Support for Recovering Families			2.6	4.1	0.1
DCF Child Guidance Clinics					
DCF Family Support Teams				4.5	3.3
DMHAS Substance Abuse Grants			0.2		
DMHAS Mental Health Grants			0.9		
DMHAS Managed Service System			0.3		
<b>DCF Investigations</b>			<b>27.2</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>36.2</b>
DCF Intensive In-home Services			3.7	5.5	
CHEFA Loans to Day Care Centers		2.0			
Certificate Eligibility Development				0.6	
CCMIS (Maximus Contract for CCCP)		7.6	4.8	4.1	
DCF Individualized Family Support			0.1	0.1	0.1
DMR Family Support			0.3		
DMR Respite Centers			0.3	0.4	0.6
DMR Respite Grants			0.4	0.4	
Medicaid for Non-Citizens					
Judicial Alternative Incarceration				2.3	2.0
Judicial Multi-Systemic Therapy				3.7	3.7
Judicial Court-Based Juvenile Assessments				0.7	0.8
Unspecified MOE (Other)	18.0				
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>126.6</b>	<b>156.4</b>	<b>163.3</b>

\*In some cases, notably 2001, total does not match the total on the summary reports because the spending reports to the federal government were revised and no revision of the more detailed report to the Legislature was prepared.

	2001	2003	2005	2007
<b>PREVENTION OF OUT OF WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES includes:</b>				
Teen Pregnancy Prevention				
Teen Pregnancy	1.0	1.1	2.1	1.8
SDE Priority School Districts	7.4	7.5	18.1	26.8
SDE Priority School Districts ESH	2.5	3.0	3.8	4.3
SDE Youth Services Bureau	2.2	2.7	2.9	2.9
SDE Transitional School Districts	0.8			
SDE Interdistrict Coop Grant	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.5
SDE Young Parents Program	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
SDE Family Resource Centers		4.3	7.1	6.4
SDE Safe Learning Grant		0.2		
OPM LEAP	2.3	0.7	0.5	0.9
OPM Neighborhood Youth Centers	2.0	1.0		1.6
OPM Grants to Boys and Girls Clubs	0.7	0.1		
OPM Children and Youth Development	0.2			
OPM Truancy Prevention	0.6			
OPM Governor's Prevention Partnership	0.5			
DPH Paternity Registry	0.2			
DPH Pregnancy Healthline		0.1		
DCF Early Childhood Development		2.1	1.0	1.1
DCF Extended Day Treatment			3.9	6.7
DMHAS Special Population		2.7	17.1	16.7
DMHAS Grants for Substance Abuse		0.3		
DMHAS Governor's Partnership		0.1		
DSS Family Planning		0.1		
Judicial IOM				
Judicial Counseling Services		1.1	0.9	1.3
Judicial Truancy Services		0.3	0.2	
Judicial STARS		0.5	0.5	0.6
Judicial JSRC		2.5		
Judicial Juv Justice Center		2.6	3.0	
Judicial Alt Detention Program		2.9	2.6	2.1
Judicial Community Detention Program		2.2	2.0	2.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>76.5</b>



<b>CHILD CARE includes:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>
Employment Services Child Care	2.8	10.1	0.6	0.8
Work Related Child Care	13.8			
Child Care Certificate Program	16.7	12.6	2.0	18.3
Transitional Child Care	26.9		10.0	13.6
SDE School Readiness	35.5	15.7		
Child Day Care				

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95.7</b>	<b>38.4</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>32.7</b>
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**2-PARENT FAMILY FORMATION includes:**

Fatherhood Initiative		0.6	0.3	0.5
DOC Education and Training		9.7	4.1	5.8
DOC Addiction Services for Non-Custodial Parents		7.5	2.8	3.5
DMHAS Problem Gambling		0.3	0.4	0.2

<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18.1</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>10.0</b>
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**PRIOR LAW includes:**

DCF Case Management Services	3.1	10.2	9.0	11.8
DCF Family Preservation	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.7
DCF EA Foster Care & Res. Treatment	6.6	4.5	3.7	4.5
DCF Foster Care "Non-Claimable Balance"			2.0	1.7

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>18.7</b>
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